



March 2, 2015

The Hon. Don McRae, MLA
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Dear Mr. McRae,

We are writing to you in your former capacity as Minister for Social Development and Social Innovation to express our appreciation for your role in the provincial budget announcement of the elimination of the clawback of child support payments from single parents on income assistance.

We very much appreciated the time you took to attend our December coalition meeting to listen to the testimonials from single mothers on income and disability assistance who have experienced the damaging effects of the policy that has treated child support as income to be deducted from their benefit cheques. Representatives of our community partner organizations, many with extensive front-line contact with single parents struggling to live on income and disability assistance, also appreciated the opportunity to share with you and ministry staff the harmful impacts they have witnessed resulting from this policy, as well as their suggestions for change.

We also want to thank you for the second policy change announced, that is, the elimination of the mandatory assignment of family maintenance rights when parents apply for income and disability assistance. As you heard and we described in our submission to the Family Maintenance Consultation, many women, in particular, have experienced a range of negative effects as a result of the application of this policy.

These two announced policy changes are important steps in the recognition of children's rights and more respectful treatment of their parents when they find themselves in need of government assistance in BC.

For the families and children involved in bringing about these changes, it has been re-affirming to be heard by their government and to have their recommendations accepted. They also had the benefit of the strong support of your colleague, MLA Michelle Mungall, who helped bring their voices to the Legislature and to the attention of the public. This is an example to them of how public policy can be improved when elected representatives from both sides of the Legislature work to make sure it is informed by the evidence of citizens' experiences.

We look forward to working with your successor as minister, the Honourable Michelle Stilwell, and ministry staff as these policy changes are implemented. We are aware that the budget to provide legal support for those parents who want the ministry's help in obtaining a court order for family maintenance remains intact and know this option will need to be communicated clearly to them.

.../ 2

As I'm sure you know, there remain a number of other improvements First Call would like to see implemented within the income and disability assistance programs and other aspects of government policy in order to better support children's healthy development and help move families out of poverty. We are anxious to have those discussions with your government.

For today, on behalf of the thousands of children whose lives will be improved when the child support clawback is ended, we thank you again for your part in bringing about these policy changes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Adrienne Montani". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Adrienne Montani
Provincial Coordinator

Copies: Christy Clark, Premier
John Horgan, Leader of the Opposition
Michelle Mungall, Opposition Spokesperson for Social Development
Michelle Stilwell, Minister of Social Development and Social Innovation
Molly Harrington, Assistant Deputy Minister, Research, Innovation and Policy Division
First Call Coalition Partner Organizations

Provincial and Regional Partner Organizations

ACT - Autism Community Training
 Adoptive Families Association of BC
 Affiliation of Multicultural Societies & Service Agencies
 Alternate Shelter Society
 Association for Community Education BC
 Association of Neighbourhood Houses of British Columbia
 Autism Society of BC
 Baobab Inclusive Empowerment Society
 BC Aboriginal Child Care Society
 BC Association for Child Development & Intervention
 BC Association of Family Resource Programs
 BC Association of Pregnancy Outreach Programs
 BC Association of Social Workers
 BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils
 BC Council for Families
 BC Crime Prevention Association
 BC Federation of Foster Parents Association
 BC Government & Service Employees' Union
 BC Play Therapy Association
 BC Recreation and Parks Association
 BC Retired Teachers' Association
 BC Society for Public Education
 BC Society of Transition Houses
 BC Teachers' Federation
 Big Sisters of BC Lower Mainland
 Boys and Girls Clubs of BC
 Breakfast for Learning BC & Yukon
 Canadian Association for Young Children
 Canadian Federation of Students - BC
 Canadian Mental Health Association BC Division
 Canadian Red Cross – RespectEd
 Capilano Students' Union
 Caring for First Nations Children Society
 Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs
 Cerebral Palsy Association of BC
 Children's and Women's Health Centre of BC
 Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC
 Columbia/Kootenay Advocacy and Education Resource Society
 Communities that Care- Squamish
 Community Action Toward Children's Health
 Council of Parent Participation Preschools BC
 Court Appointed Special Advocates for Children (CASA) of Greater Victoria Society
 Deaf Children's Society of BC
 Developmental Disabilities Association
 Dietitians of Canada, BC Region
 Directorate of Agencies for School Health BC
 Early Childhood Educators of BC
 East Kootenay Childhood Coalition

Elizabeth Fry Society of Greater Vancouver
 Family Services of Greater Vancouver
 Federation of BC Youth In Care Networks
 Federation of Community Social Services of BC
 Health Officers' Council of British Columbia
 Helping Spirit Lodge Society
 Hospital Employees' Union
 Immigrant Services Society of BC
 Infant Development Program of BC
 Inclusion BC
 Justice Institute of BC
 Kamloops and District Elizabeth Fry Society
 Learning Disabilities Association of BC
 Mary Manning Centre
 McCreary Centre Society
 Métis Commission for Children and Families of B.C.
 Mom to Mom Child Poverty Initiative
 MOSAIC
 National Council of Jewish Women of Canada- Vancouver Section
 Pacific Association of First Nations Women
 Pacific Community Resources Society
 Pacific Immigrant Resources Society
 Parent Support Services Society of BC
 PeerNetBC
 Penticton & District Community Resources Society
 Phoenix Human Services Association
 PLEA Community Services Society of BC
 Progressive Intercultural Community Services Society
 Provincial Association of Residential & Community Agencies
 Public Health Association of BC
 Single Mothers' Alliance of BC
 Social Planning & Research Council of BC
 Society for Children and Youth of BC
 S.U.C.C.E.S.S.
 Summit Negotiations Society
 Sunshine Coast Community Services Society
 Take a Hike Youth At Risk Foundation
 Toxic Free Canada
 UFV Centre for Safe Schools and Communities
 United Way of the Lower Mainland
 University Women's Club of Vancouver
 Vancouver Coastal Health Authority– Population Health
 West Coast Legal Education and Action Fund
 Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre
 Westcoast Family Centres Society
 Western Society for Children
 Women Against Violence Against Women
 YWCA Metro Vancouver